

## STUDIES IN PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

Our Paris correspondent writes as follows, under date of November 27:

A letter printed in *La Liberté* last evening, dated Nov. 20, and written from Portici, at the foot of Vesuvius, by an observant engineer, has given a round of the most remarkable movements of the lava streams that break out in the night of the 14th. I quote his closing paragraph: "The force of impulsion that moves this mass is equal to 0.112,130,000,000 kilogrammes, and the dynamic power applied by such a force is equal to 40,780,000,000 horsepower. The lava is now only a few kilometres distant from the smiling villages of San Ziorio, San Stefano, and San Giorgio." In a week from now, these rivers do not know where they will be led, either by a heap of sand, and when no more vast villas there will be but formless masses of scoria and lava. God grant that my fears be not fulfilled. Already some hundreds of families are homeless and exposed to the hardest privations." Of the wasting inundations in Switzerland, this Autumn your European files told you, while your papers come to us filled with accounts of terrible earthquakes on the Pacific coast, and of enormous shocks which have even split England in two and prostrated.

The internal convulsions and cutaneous eruptions, and other troubles with which our poor earth is so tried this year, are apt to give a fresh impulse to the study of physical geography. A most excellent manual, or rather comprehensive cyclopaedia of that new science is *La Terre*, by Eléate Reclus, the second and final volume of which admirably is just out of press. The printed book, the result of 15 years' labor, is a mine of general observations on portions of North and South America, and various countries of Europe; and of wonderful, careful perusal and comparison of nearly everything that has been published, of society, memoirs, and of a considerable private correspondence during these 16 years, relating to the study of the manifold themes which can be classed under the general head of physical geography. So that we have, on one hand, encyclopedic, whole and in beautiful harmonious arrangement, a best, latest edition of the *Life and Times of Mother Earth*—The Manners and Customs of Her. The subtitle of this volume "describing the phenomena of the life of our globe" is "*The Ocean, The Atmosphere, Life*." In the last of these three divisions, presenting the action and consequences of Man's Nature, the author has given us entire chapters on the induction of physical geography to the high claim of a beneficent, humane study. To the admirable clearness of method and style of the text, come in 200 really illustrative engravings on the page, and 27 colored maps—some of them elegant enough for refined ornament, all diligently accurate and faithful to their purpose of explanatory use.

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